



**DOWNTOWN MESA SIRRINE HOUSE
REQUEST FOR QUALIFICATIONS**
URBAN AGRICULTURE AND EDUCATION IN DOWNTOWN MESA

Publish Date: August 14, 2023

The City of Mesa is soliciting a Request for Qualifications (RFQ) for an urban farmer and community educator at the Serrine House, located at 160 N. Center Street in Mesa, Arizona. The City reimagines the Serrine House as a center for on-site agriculture production and agriculture-oriented community education.

The Serrine House is owned by the City of Mesa and includes the Historic Serrine House and carriage house on a .60 acre site that is currently inactive. The City is performing repairs and designing improvements to the property in preparation for future site activation, on-site agriculture production and distribution, events, and education.

APPLICATION WINDOW:

August 14, 2023; 8:00 a.m. September 28, 2023; 5:00 p.m. Arizona Local Time

PRE-SUBMITTAL DISCUSSION WITH THE CITY OF MESA:

The discussion provides interested parties an opportunity to learn more about this opportunity, see renderings of the future site and ask questions. Attendances is not required.

Date and Time: September 11, 2023; 11:00 a.m. Local Arizona time.

[Virtual Link Via Microsoft Teams](#) or Meeting ID: 249 324 143 055 Passcode: CAGbyr

QUESTIONS

Please Direct Questions To:

Jeff Robbins

Senior Economic Development Project Manager

Phone: 480-644-5249

Jeffrey.robbins@mesaaz.gov



OPPORTUNITY DETAILS

1. **DOWNTOWN MESA BACKGROUND:** With a population of more than 510,000, Mesa, Arizona is the 35th largest city in the United States and second largest in the Phoenix-Mesa metro area. Mesa encompasses 138 square miles within the broader Phoenix-Mesa metropolitan area that has a population of 4.7 million people and is projected to grow to 6 million by 2030. Mesa has received many recent accolades including #8 Safest City and #15 Best Big City to Live in the country.¹

The original one square mile of Mesa, incorporated in 1883, comprises the downtown core. The downtown square mile is home to the historic retail core, the largest comprehensive arts center in the Southwest, Mesa Amphitheater, Mesa Convention Center, museums, multiple higher education institutions, four nationally registered historic districts and a vibrant arts and culture scene (<http://www.mesaartscenter.com> and <https://www.downtownmesa.com>).

Many significant projects are in various stages of planning and development including Arizona State University MIX Center, multiple mixed-use projects, a recent multi-million-dollar renovation of Pioneer Park, and a comprehensive renovation of the Historic LDS Temple. The area also hosts the Downtown Mesa Farmers' Market at Inspire Farms and will be the home to a restaurant incubator in partnership with Local First Arizona. Downtown is also home to numerous restaurants, breweries and annual public events attracting tens of thousands of visitors each year.

2. **PROPERTY BACKGROUND:** Located along the southwest corner of W. 2nd St and N. Center Street, the .60 acre Property is proximate to the Mesa Convention Center and within walking distance to the Center Street light rail station and a prosperous historic district. There is currently limited on-site parking and future use will rely on on-street parking and Convention Center overflow parking.

The jewel of the site is the historic Sirrinc House and its contributing carriage house, constructed by American pioneers in 1896. The house has been maintained by the City of Mesa in partnership with the Mesa Historical Museum but receives little tourism and activity in its current state.

Through a city-wide public engagement initiative in 2018, Mesa residents requested conversion of the Sirrinc House to an agricultural learning center. The City has completed conceptual design for the entire site, which concept includes approximately 4,500 sf of in-ground urban farming. The City is currently preparing a final design for the Sirrinc House.

¹ According to WalletHub and SafeWise.com national reports



3. **MINIMUM PARTNER QUALIFICATIONS:**

- 2 years experience in farming for profit, either as an employee or operator
- 1 year relevant experience in educational instruction and/or mentorship in urban agriculture/gardening

Desired Qualifications:

- Experience selling at farmers' markets
- Direct B2B sales experience in agriculture
- Experience working with government
- Existing urban farm location in Mesa

4. **CITY'S POTENTIAL COMMITMENT AND CONTRIBUTIONS:**

- Agronomy testing and report
- Removal of decomposed granite and site preparation
- Installation of water infrastructure up to the irrigation system
- Possible construction of a greenhouse and storage shed
- Shade canopy for education and classes
- Access to on-site restrooms
- Fencing around agriculture zone
- Food distribution point for use by partner
- Connections to downtown businesses for B2B produce sale

All details of the agreement will be negotiated with the selected partner and document via contract with the City. See section 5.

5. **PARTNER EXPECTATIONS AND POTENTIAL COMMITMENT:**

The ideal partner is an urban farmer that can make the site profitable while embracing the site's role in the neighboring community. The partner will be expected to provide, either directly or through a third-party partner, gardening and farming educational classes at no-to minimal-cost (depending on the class) to members of the community. The City may consider the value of gardening and farming educational classes provided in determining the lease rate.

The City anticipates that the partner selected, based on their qualifications, will enter into discussions to negotiate a lease for part of the site for agriculture and educational uses. During the negotiation process, the selected partner will be expected to participate, without fee, in a limited number of design meetings as a consultant for the agriculture portion of the site and in anticipation of a future lease award.



Below is a sample of expectations the City anticipates in any future contract:

Farming

- Enter into negotiations with the City for a lease of the urban farming portion of the Serrine House property
- Utilize urban farming techniques to cultivate and grow produce within the agriculture zone of the Serrine House
 - Minimal equipment should be kept on-site.
 - Storage for hand tools and small equipment is negotiable and may be provided for via a storage shed.
 - Maintain an active farm for as many months as feasible, ideally 10+ months of the year
 - Maintain a clean and tidy appearance of the Agriculture Zone

Education

- Organize, promote and conduct classes at no-cost for members of the public on topics related to urban agriculture
 - Minimum of one class per month. Additional classes, especially during months with cooler weather, are desirable
 - Provide a list of potential classes and brief class description to the City in advance
 - Work with the City, the future site manager and Downtown Mesa Association to promote classes
 - Some for-profit classes, in addition to public no-cost classes, are negotiable

Promotion

- Coordinate with the City and Downtown Mesa Association to promote the Serrine House by interacting with the media
 - Possible cross-promotion for future activities on the north half of the property

The scope of work will be refined through lease negotiations with the City of Mesa



6. **SELECTION PROCESS:**

Applicants can anticipate the following process.

Responses to this RFQ will be evaluated and the highest scoring urban farmer will be selected to negotiate. The next two highest rated urban farmers will be waitlisted should negotiation with the originally selected firm prove mutually unbeneficial.

Anticipated Process

- Evaluation and rating of all RFQ responses
- Invitations for interviews (if needed)
- Top-rated urban farmer and waitlist firms are notified
- Negotiation with top-rated urban farmer and design consultations begin
- City and top-rated firm agree to terms of the agreement
- Commencement of lease

Anticipated Schedule:

Pre-Submittal Discussion:	September 11, 11:00 a.m.
Written questions/requests for clarification due:	September 14, 5:00 p.m.
RFQ responses due:	September 28, 5:00 p.m.
Evaluation of RFQ submittals	October 2-5
Interview (if needed)	October 16-19
Urban Farmers and waitlisted developers selected:	October 23-26
Negotiations:	Winter 2023
Agreement signed:	Spring 2023
Commencement of lease period	Summer/Fall 2023

7. **INSTRUCTIONS**

- You may deliver your response digitally and all questions to jeffrey.robbyns@mesaaz.gov or a physical copy to the security desk on the first floor of the Mesa City Plaza Building, 20 E. Main Street, Mesa, Arizona.
- You may be contacted by phone or email for follow-up information
- An addenda may be attached to this solicitation to provide additional information after the RFQ open date.

8. CURRENT SITE AND CONCEPTUAL IMAGERY





RESPONSE FORM:

Business Name/DBA:	
Name:	Phone:
Address:	Email:
Years of experience in urban farming for profit:	
Years of relevant experience in direct educational instruction and/or mentorship in urban agriculture:	
Education, Licenses or Certifications:	
ACC Entity ID No.:	Entity Name:
Experience selling at farmers' markets? Y / N	
Direct sales experience in agriculture? Y / N	
Experience working with a government entity? Y / N	
Currently owns a farm in Mesa? Y / N	
Provide name, contact, and telephone number of one (1) reference that has done business with your farm:	
Reference Name:	
Contact Person:	Phone:
Address:	Email:
Please describe the nature of the business services provided and dates of service:	
Please provide a brief summary of your concept for the Agricultural Zone of the Serrine House:	

List any other information which may help determine your qualifications:

A large, empty rectangular box with a black border, intended for the applicant to provide additional information regarding their qualifications.